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**Digital Design Foundations
Spring, 2012
University of Pennsylvania
School of Design**

ASSIGNMENT 01: THE BLACK SQUARE PROBLEM

By using only four black squares, create a graphic image that best expresses the meaning of any of the following six words: order, increase, bold, congested, tension, and playful. Your final output from Illustrator will be 3 pages (see below, right). Each page will contain 5 different images/variations expressing one word and each image will contain 4 squares.

Using only four squares is a seemingly limited palette to express such diverse words, yet these squares can be expanded into a more comprehensive language by utilizing various design principles. Make sure to consider the effects of such concepts of shape, figure/ground, scale, balance and compositional space.

To start, print a page of thumbnail squares to get started (see below, left). In each 1.5" x 1.5" thumb-

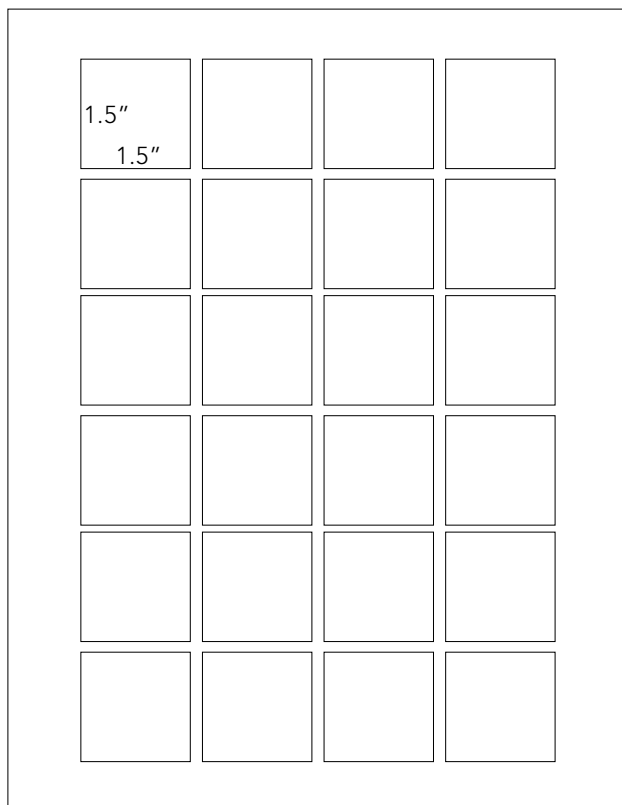
nail, use a **marker** to sketch 4 squares that express your chosen word. Do 3 pages of thumbnails, 24 separate images on each page that describe one word per page. Do NOT title your thumbnail pages.

Remember to use 4 squares per thumbnail/image. But these 4 squares can be cropped, overlaid, rotated and scaled to help describe your word. No outlines or skewing of your 4 squares (they must be perfect squares unless cropping makes them appear like another shape).

After reviewing your sketches in class, we will select the most effective solutions for you to develop and execute using Illustrator (see layout below, right).

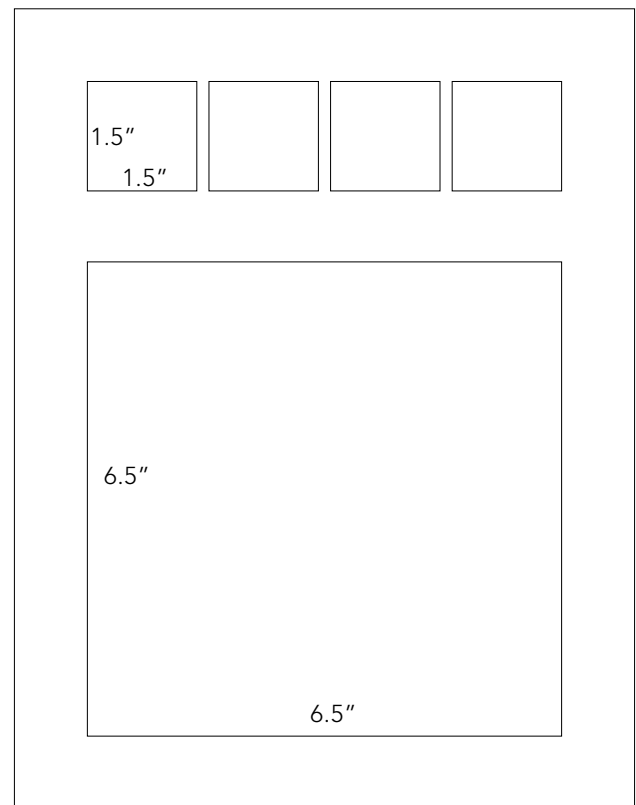
The final product for Assignment 01 will be **3 flush-mounted untitled laser printed pages** that should effectively communicate their message. Each of the 3 pages will be mounted on bristol board and should represent just one of the 6 words.

Thumbnail Sketches
(in marker only)



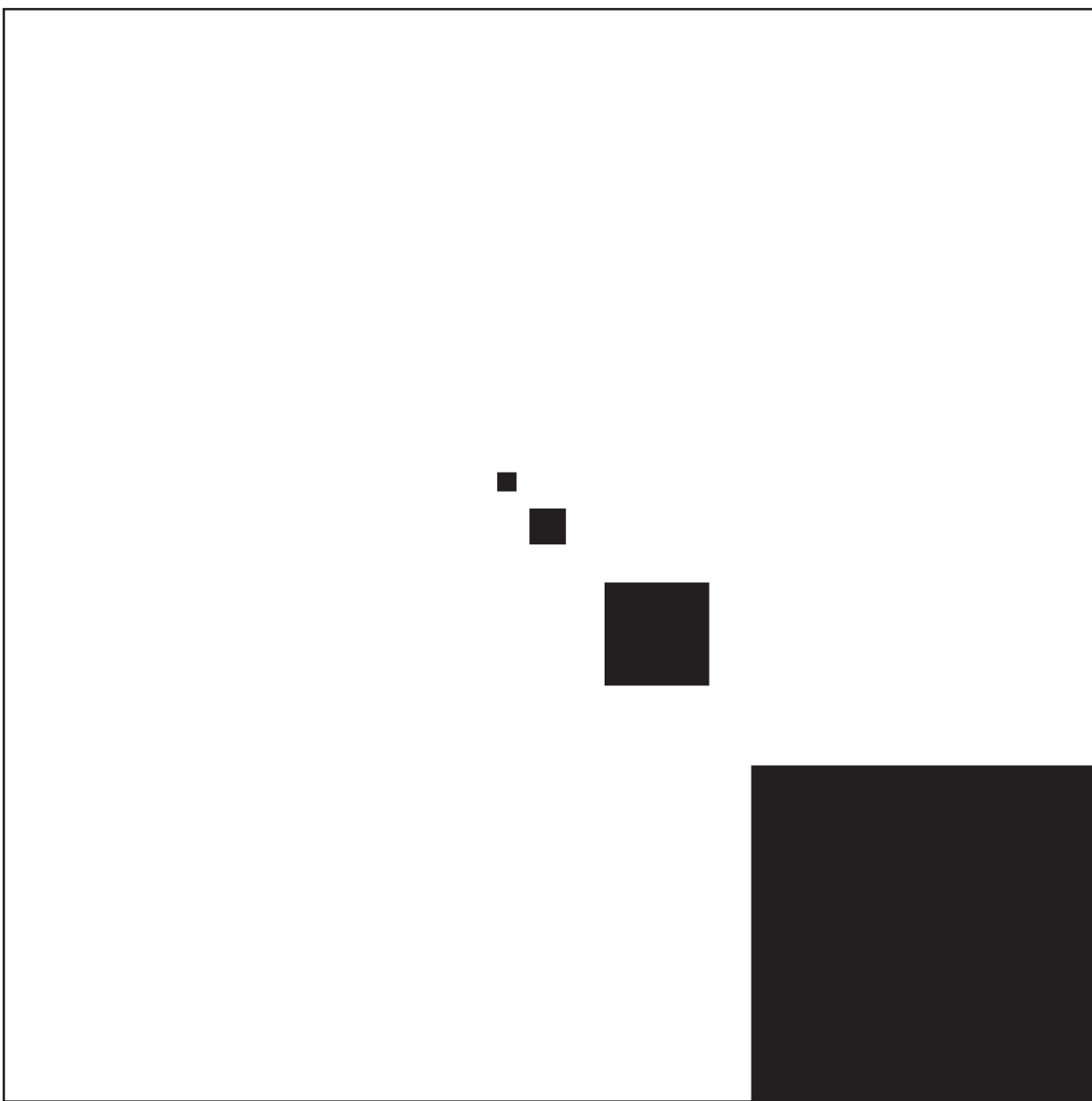
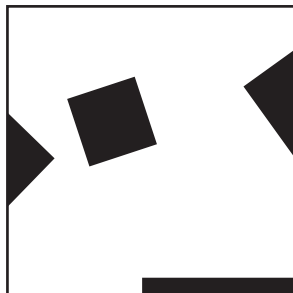
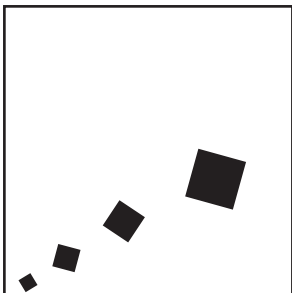
8.5"

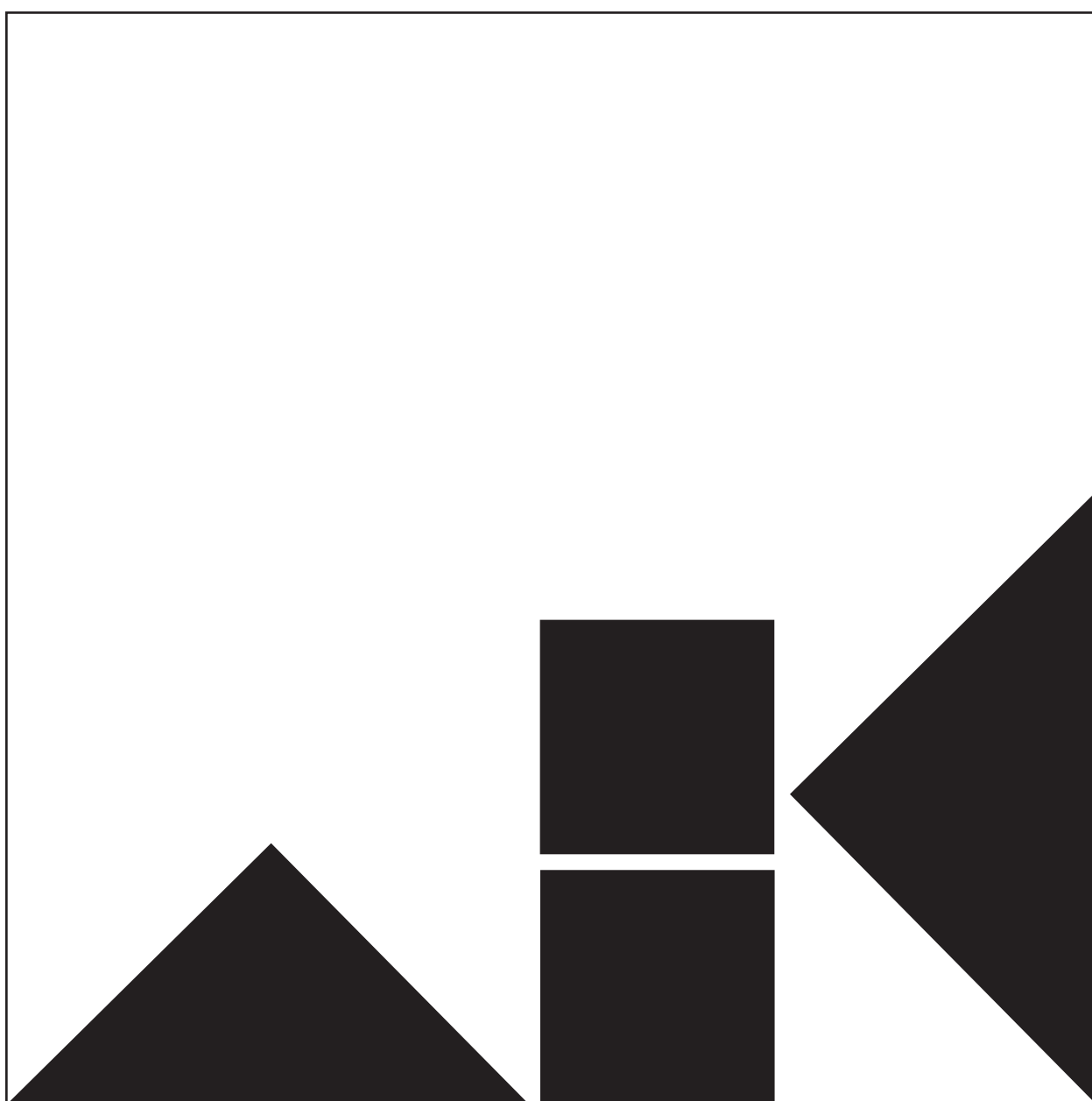
Final Output
(3 pages for 3 words)

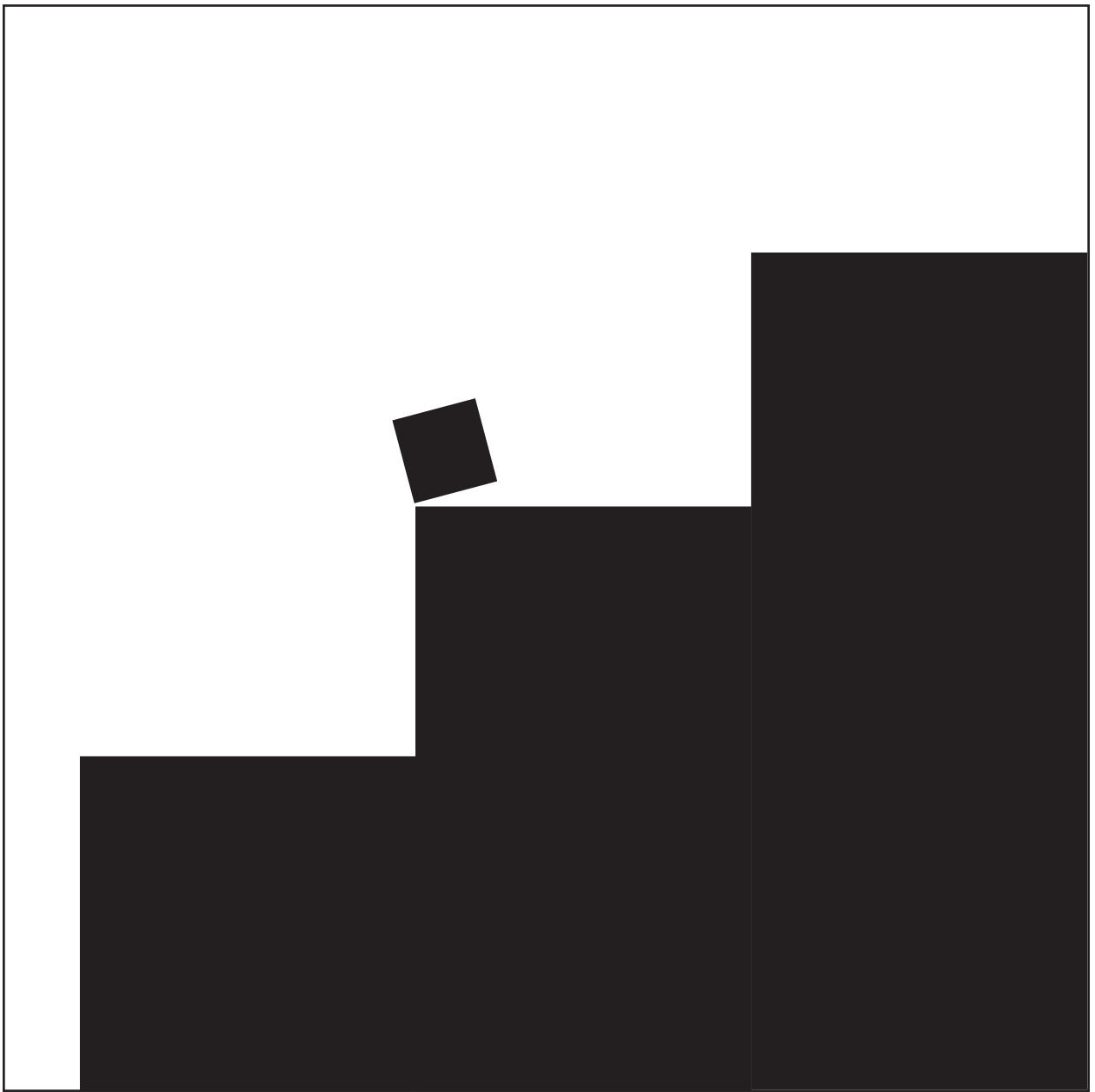
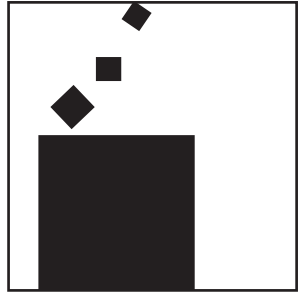
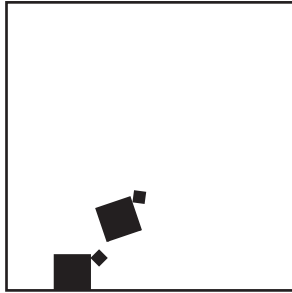
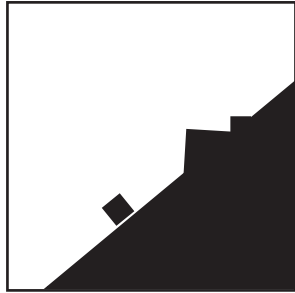
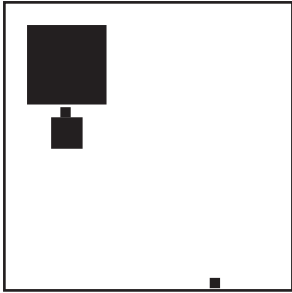


11"

8.5"







ASSIGNMENT 02: TRIPTYCH WITH NEGATIVE SPACE

The Zen concept that a bowl's essence is the part that is "missing" corresponds to the graphic concept of negative space. Apply this idea by using only negative shapes to interpret any of the following topics visually: coffee shop, laundry, Dracula, truck driving, the circus, or camping. No type or numbers should be used.

The subjects themselves should not be drawn: only the surrounding negative space and possibly areas in shadow should be addressed, and only in black. As a design consideration, the images may be cropped to show only a portion of the subjects.

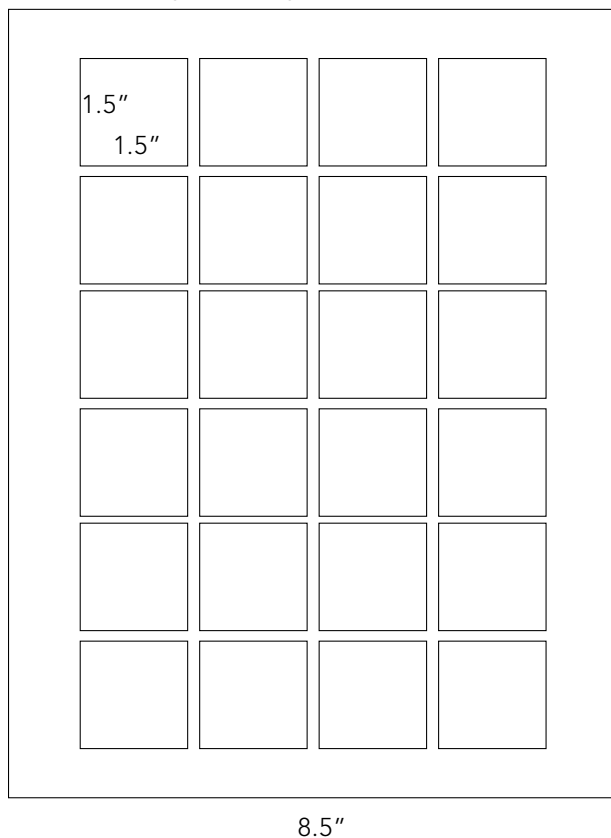
Print out a three sheets of 1.5"x 1.5" squares (24 per page). Use a black marker to create thumbnail sketches of three of the given topics

that you wish to address. Please only use one topic per page. You can do more sketches than these if you wish but create your thumbnails with marker so we can discuss them as a class.

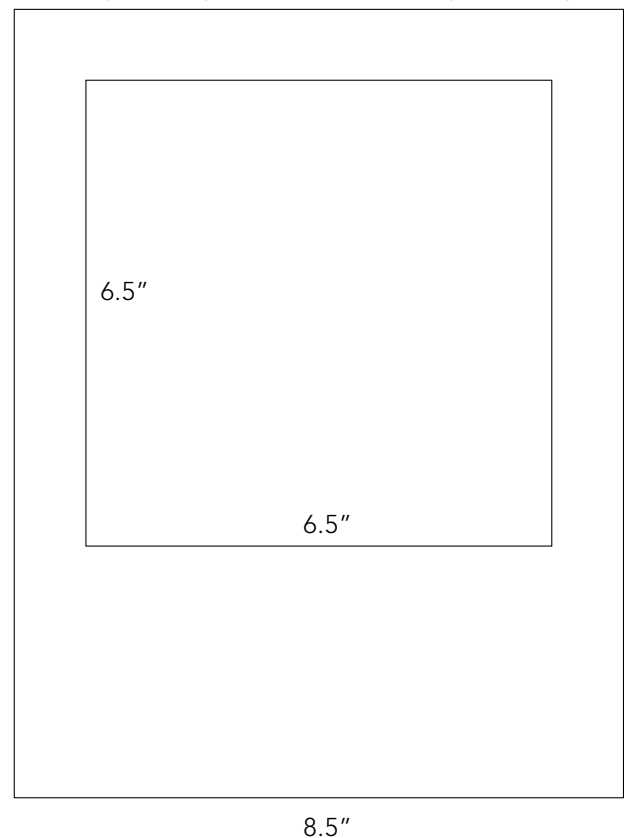
For the next portion of the assignment, we will choose three of your thumbnail sketches and recreate all three of them in Illustrator using a 6.5"x 6.5" format (see "Secondary Output" below). These three images (all of the same topic) should work as a series. Their success will be based on addressing formal design concepts such as compositional space, visual balance and weight, as well as addressing other design concerns such as visual legibility, creativity of execution, conceptual appropriateness and clarity of the delivered message or topic.

For the final portion of the assignment, we will cut out three 6.5" x 6.5" images and mount them as a series. See "Assignment 02: Mounting Instructions" for the final project format.

Thumbnail Sketch Format
(print 3 pages - using marker sketch 3 topics)



Secondary Output Format
(3 pages using Illustrator, one image per page)



ASSIGNMENT 02: TRIPTYCH WITH NEGATIVE SPACE (continued...)

COMMENTS ON THE PROJECT:

The idea of formulating an image by only addressing its background changes the habitual approach toward seeing. When viewers are led to focus solely on background and shadowed areas, it is the unmarked portion of the page—the white ground—that becomes magically transformed into a recognizable subject. The traditional image-making process is thereby reversed, with a greater emphasis on compositional concerns, negative-positive relationships, and formal reference.

These images tend to encourage viewers to reverse the images' negative and positive fields mentally, making the positive areas become negative and vice versa. The classic goblet-profiles image is a good example of this.

The study of volume and light is another area of exploration within this problem. Through the subtle articulation of light and shadow, an entire image can be implied. This allows the viewer to participate by instinctively completing the missing visual information, thereby becoming directly involved with the piece. This mechanism, like the concept of negative and positive forms reversing themselves, challenges the viewer's attention—which is the goal of visual communication.

NOTE: To clarify the meaning of what negative and positive relationships are, it should be understood that images appearing on the page surface are positive, while anything appearing farther back in space is negative. Black DOES NOT necessarily represent the negative space.

Project created and taken from *Visual Literacy* by Judith Wilde and Richard Wilde, pg 29-39







ASSIGNMENT 03: POWER ANIMAL MANDALA

What is your power animal? In the shamanic worldview, everyone has a "power animal," a tutelary spirit guide that may empower and protect an individual. Often the power animal offers unique qualities or attributes to the individual. In this assignment, you will have to decide on one animal that you would like to use as the main topic, the power animal, represented in your piece.

Your piece should take the form of a mandala. Mandalas form a circle and often contain concentric circles and other repetitive patterns or designs. The most popular form of the mandala probably occurs within the Buddhist tradition where every portion of the mandala is filled with icons and symbolism. But mandalas are also often viewed as being generally symbolic of the cosmos or the universe.

In this assignment, begin by deciding on a power animal you would like to use in your piece. Next, research mandalas and the many different kinds of concentric, circular patterns that mandalas often take. Finally, begin to weave your chosen power animal into a mandala. You may want to do some of your sketching in Illustrator before working in Photoshop.

Your mandala must fulfill the following requirements:

1) the final work must clearly represent a mandala and the power animal of your

choice by using recognizable elements from or directly related to your animal - i.e. skin or fur patterns, feathers, horns, paw prints, food your animal eats or important elements from the habitat of your power animal, etc

2) you may put a full shape or silhouette of your animal in your mandala but you can not actually show an photographic image of your animal - your animal must be indicated through symbolism and icons only

3) you may only use one flat shape in your entire mandala; all other shapes must contain some form of texture or other element specifically related to your power animal - your mandala should not contain any hand drawn line

4) the final work must be created in Photoshop and can include a combination of hand drawn shapes from Illustrator and found imagery from print or web resources

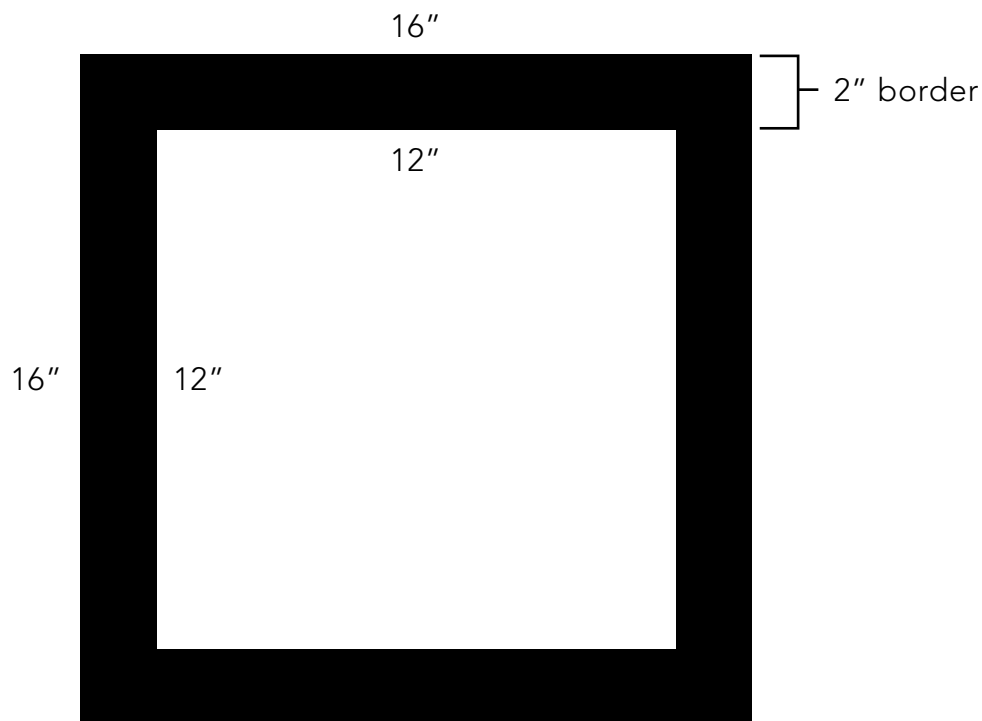
5) the final printed piece should be 12" x 12" square mounted on 16" x 16" square black board which will give the piece the appearance of a 2" black border

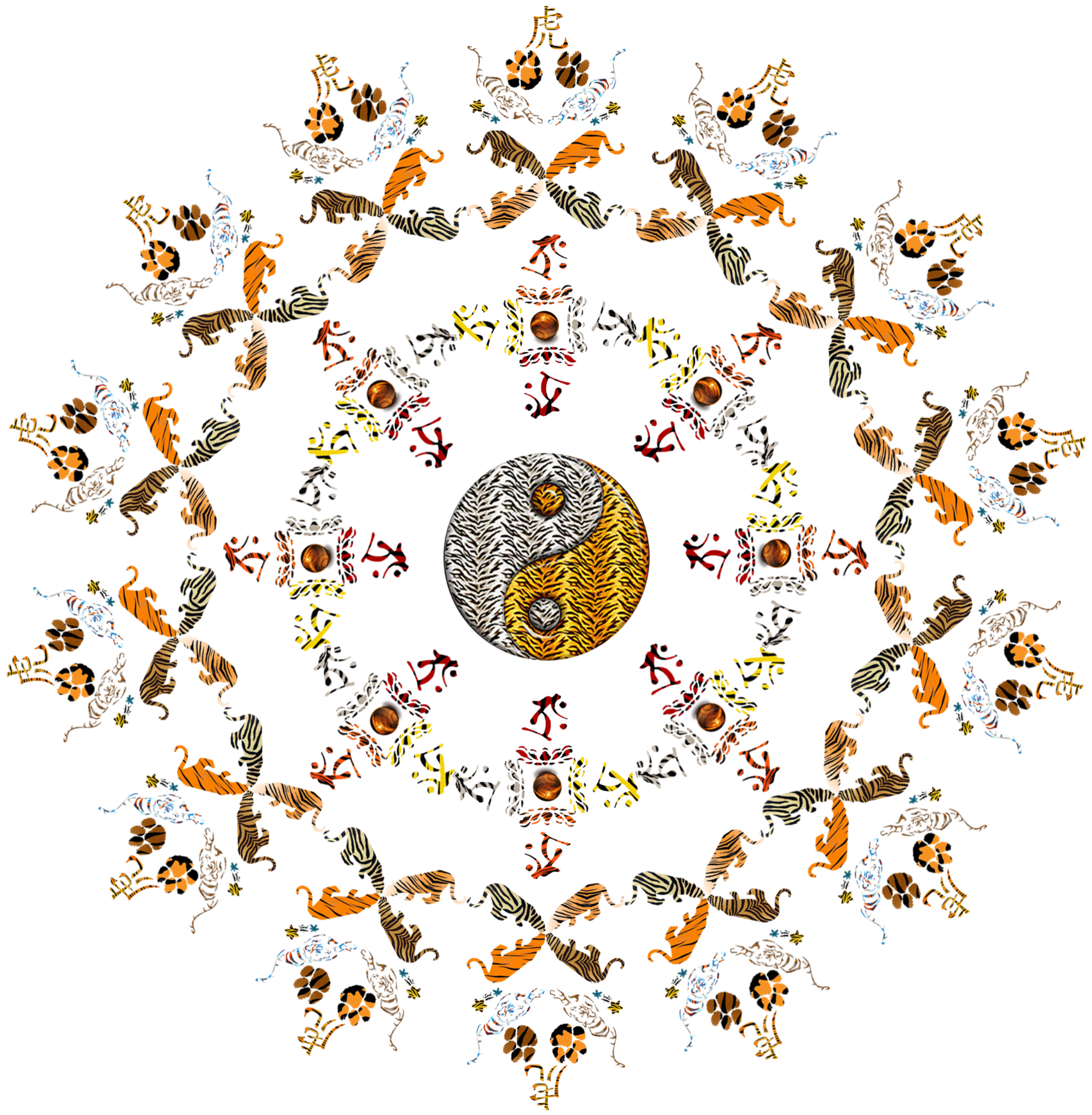
6) although a mandala is a circular pattern, all of the 12"x 12" piece should be considered and all surface addressed

The success of the piece will depend on several factors including: how well does

ASSIGNMENT 03: POWER ANIMAL MANDALA (continued...)

the piece convey your chosen animal? can we tell what your animal is by the use of recognizable elements in your work? how well does the piece work as a design? does the work feel unified and intentional? what is the gestalt of the piece, does it reference the form of a mandala? are we able to establish a sense of rhythm in the use of pattern? how is color addressed and does the use of color help to hold the piece together or does it break the piece apart?





ASSIGNMENT 04: POSTER FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Creating an image for a poster can be a fun and interesting assignment but creating a memorable image for a poster is often a much more difficult task. Your goal for this assignment is to raise public awareness for a topic of social concern of your choice by creating a primary image for your poster that conveys your topic effectively and memorably, without using type.

First, create a collage or image that is 16.125 inches wide by 20.125 inches high using photoshop. Then, place your psd (photoshop) file in an indesign document that uses the format on the following page. Your psd image should allow "room" for copy at the bottom of your poster. This copy should be used in the strict format shown on following page. The title to your piece should be "A Campaign for Public Awareness." The smaller running text should inform and give facts about your topic of social concern and should also include a call to action, a phone number or web address, regarding how the viewer can help. Please review the format and recreate it carefully. That type should not be used to explain the meaning of the image in your poster. The poster image alone should clearly and effectively relate the topic of social concern you are addressing.

In this assignment there will be 4 major considerations: composition, color, contrast, and (perhaps most importantly) concept. Of course, other design foundation ideas like focal point, context/

subject, representational image making (stylization or abstraction), quality of production and others still apply.

A GOOD IDEA IS ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA (AND CAN ALWAYS BE DONE BETTER). A BAD IDEA WILL ALWAYS BE A BAD IDEA.

In this assignment we will focus on the desire for strong concept coupled with great design. Great design is memorable and communicates a message effectively. Using a strong concept in your work will help you get to the finished product more quickly and with more of an impact. Choosing a precise topic will help you better target your concept.

When it comes to creating a strong concept, great ideas often develop from providing strong contrast. Contrast can work in a strictly visual sense (i.e. color, scale, texture, figure/ground, etc) or you may also create contrast in the meanings conveyed by your images (i.e. context/subject, conceptual contrast). Regardless of how you show contrast, your (one) message should be clear.

FINDING NEW OPPORTUNITIES (AKA: GOOD IDEAS ARE KING)

You'll hear the expression that graphic design is about problem solving. In this class, I would like to see design as the chance to find new opportunities. Think about solutions for your topic and, using 5 letterhead sized sheets of paper and a marker, sketch at least 5 ideas for the next class.

Bleed

Final Poster should be 16" wide x 20" high

Create an Indesign Document that is 16" x 20" in size and then add .125" Bleed all around

Print with Crop Marks and Bleed - then cut off bleed/cut poster down to 16" x 20" for Final Poster Size

A Campaign for Public Awareness

This box is a 14"x1.5" with a 5pt black border, centered horizontal and 1.5" from bottom of the page. Text is in a text box 10" by 0.8". This copy is three lines high & spans the x-height of primary title (at left) in the roman font of Universe, Helvetica or Avenir. Align text left or justify if appropriate. This running text should briefly address your issue of public concern, approximately 400 characters maximum.

Bleed



A Campaign for Public Awareness

Fossil fuels are used to generate over 2/3 of the electricity consumed in the United States. Electric power plants that use fossil fuels are the single largest source of air pollution in the U.S. The consequences of burning fossil fuels lead to environmental health hazards and the effects that contribute to climate change. Wind is a clean source of renewable energy that produces no air or water pollution. And since the wind is free, operational costs are nearly zero once a turbine is erected. Mass production and technology advances are making turbines ever more practical.

ASSIGNMENT 05: THE VISUAL JOURNEY

The goal of this assignment is to create an interesting story or visual journey by using digital imagery you have captured with a camera. Your story can be dramatic, comedic, action packed, intriguing, enlightening, or even depressing. As the viewer turns the pages, your book should take the viewer on a visual journey that has understandable meaning. The physical format of the book is up to you but the “text pages” should be printed and assembled with an attached cover. A saddle-stitched booklet is a completely acceptable form for your book and we will discuss the details of saddle-stitched construction. The visuals of the book should carry a stylistic theme or concept that is engaging and relevant to the telling of the story and the formatting of the visuals should provide a pacing that is appropriate and supports the telling of your journey.

Your book should use photography that you have taken with your digital camera. If there is an image you can not capture with your camera, found imagery may be acceptable to augment the story but the majority of the images should be taken with your camera and from you. Type maybe found in your images but the book should not use typography as the primary element to lead the reader and type should generally be avoided if possible.

You can alter your photos in photoshop to bring out color, distortions, effects, etc. that are necessary to your story. Adding photoshop filters for the sake of adding “special effects” is not encouraged. Making a book that is stylistically (and conceptually) consistent with your story will reinforce the message of your story and this is the goal. This doesn’t mean the book can’t lead the viewer on a slightly misleading trip that has a red-herring or a punch-line at the end. But, in the event that there is a revelation by the end of the book, everything should be well explained and the visuals used throughout the journey should support and give meaning to this final revelation.

Keep in mind, it’s not always what you do, it’s how you do it. Even the most mundane tales can be made to seem interesting, scary or funny when presented in the right context. I request that you not illustrate any of your book. Illustration is a skill that typically takes time to develop. Photo-collage and manipulation are typically fine and as you have specific questions regarding execution, please ask.

It will be necessary to keep the construction of the book simple. You will most likely saddle-stitch the final piece. Length should be a **minimum** of 8 text pages plus cover. Cover is 4 pages because it includes inside the front cover and inside back cover.

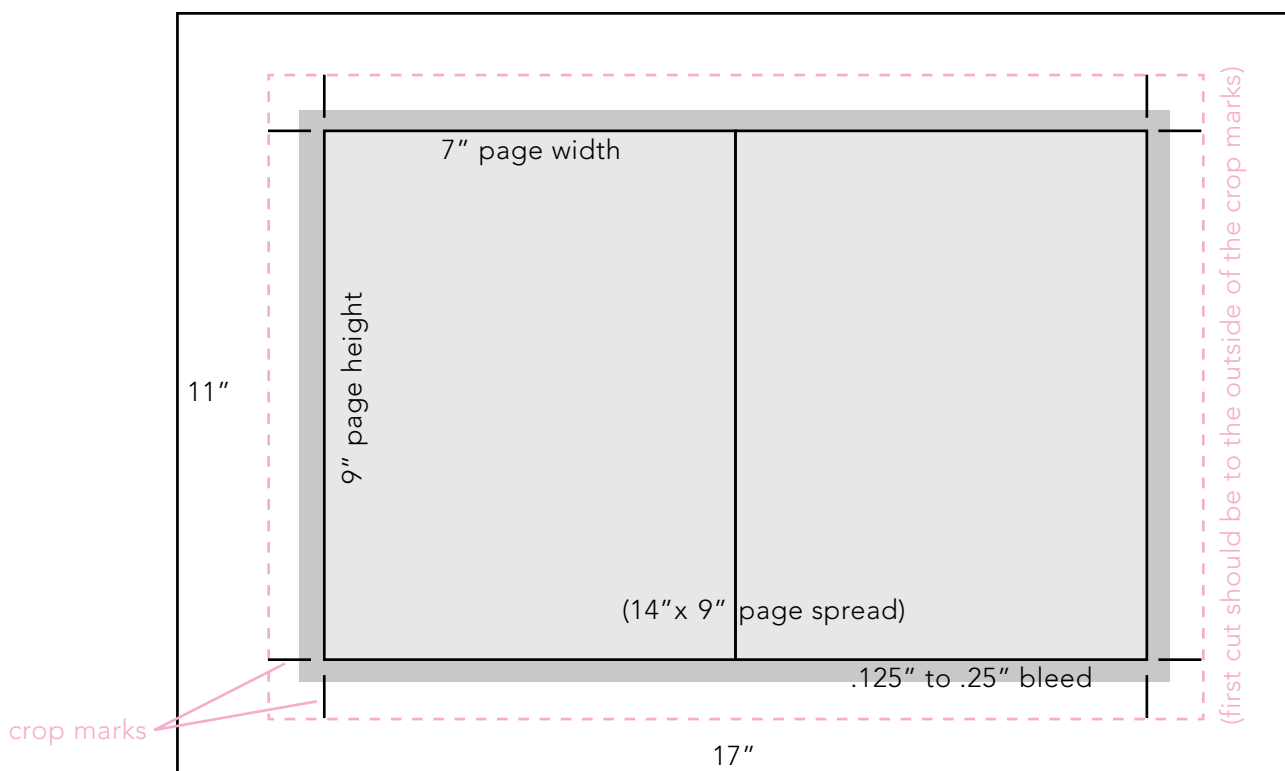
Make sure you have plenty of bleed throughout your entire piece! To be successful in printing and pasting front to back, bleed is required!

Below is an example of a spread, printed on 11"x 17", with a final spread size of 7"x 18" and a final page size of 7"x9". In the example below, the printed spread still needs to be cut out.

In almost any ready-made "comp" circumstance, the spread would be cut out to the outside of the crop marks, assembled into a book, and then recut (given a final cut) to the correct size using the inside of the crop marks. Your book maybe any size appropriate to your story and concept and you may use a print resource you feel comfortable with.

General order of saddle-stitch construction:

- 1) save your final indesign file and create a new file that places the book into printer spreads
- 2) print each of your spreads with plenty of bleed and with crop marks
- 3) cut to the outside of the crop marks - do NOT cut off the crop marks
- 4) paste your printer spreads back-to-back in the correct order, then score & fold each spread
- 5) bring your book to class and we will saddle-stitch (staple) the book in class
- 6) hold the book shut and make a final cut using the crop marks - this gives the book an even edge all around



t h e b o u n c e r

